

## **Minneapolis Planning Department**

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### **MEMORANDUM**

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DATE: March 27, 2003

TO: Council Member Gary Schiff, Chair, Zoning & Planning Committee and  
Members of the Committee

FROM: Hilary Watson, City Planner

SUBJECT: Appeal of the decision of the City Planning Commission by the Stevens  
Square Community Organization

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Gene Blackledge, on behalf of the Stevens Square Community Organization, has filed an appeal of the decision of the City Planning Commission. The appeal is associated with the decision of the City Planning Commission to approve the following applications by David Crockett for the Clinton Avenue Condominium project (BZZ-971) located at 1725 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South and 1728 Clinton Avenue South: **1)** variance to reduce the front yard setback along 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South from the required 15 feet to 4.5 feet to allow for bay windows that expand the upper three floors of the building to be constructed and to 7 feet to allow for the remaining portion of the building to be constructed, **2)** the variance to reduce the corner side yard setback along East 18<sup>th</sup> Street from the required 14 feet to zero feet to allow for bay windows that expand the upper three floors of the building to be constructed and to 1-foot 6-inches to allow for the remaining portion of the building to be constructed, **and 3)** the variance to reduce the north interior side yard setback from the required 11 feet to 2 feet 6 inches to allow for four stairwells and seven ground-level patios to be constructed and to 7 feet to allow for the remaining portion of the building to be constructed. The minutes from the February 24, 2003 City Planning Commission meeting are attached.

The appellant is appealing the decision of the City Planning Commission to approve the above referenced setback variances. The appellant has indicated that the setback variances along 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South are being appealed because they do not conform to the existing setback and orientation of buildings on the same side of the block, that they are not consistent with the front setbacks of other buildings in the neighborhood on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South or Clinton Avenue and that the orientation of the building is to East 18<sup>th</sup> Street and not to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South which does not support the vision for Avenue of the Arts as a walkable, art friendly avenue.

The appellant has indicated that the setback variances along East 18<sup>th</sup> Street are being appealed because they do not provide for adequate green space along the street that the community treasures, that the facade of the building – especially the “bay windows” design – detracts from the nature of the historic district across 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South and that an urban design for a building does not always go up to the sidewalk.

The appellant has indicated that the setback variances along the north interior property line are being appealed because the building will be built too close to existing buildings and deprive them of sufficient light and that there are no other multi-unit residential buildings in the neighborhood located so closely together.

At the February 24, 2003 City Planning Commission meeting, all ten Planning Commission members were present. Seven of the ten Planning Commissioners voted to approve the front yard setbacks along 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South and all ten of the Planning Commissioners voted to approve the corner side yard setbacks along East 18<sup>th</sup> Street and the north interior side yard setbacks.